

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 4, line 6 with the following amended paragraphs:

Referring to Figs. 2-2A, nozzle plate portion 40 includes a plurality of nozzle openings 42 formed in a substantially planar substrate 41. Also formed in substrate 41 proximate each nozzle opening 42 is a cleaning structure in the form of a radial channel 44. Radial channels 44 control stray ink on the nozzle plate that could affect nozzle performance. For example, during ink jetting, ink may end up collecting on the nozzle plate. Over time, ink can form puddles which cause printing errors. For example, puddles near the edge of a nozzle opening can effect the trajectory, velocity or volume of the ejected drops. Also, a puddle could become large enough so that it drips onto printing substrate 20 causing an extraneous mark. The puddle could also protrude far enough off the nozzle plate 40 surface that the printing substrate 20 comes into contact with it, causing a smear on the printing substrate 20. The radial channels 44 collect, localize and direct waste ink. Referring particularly to Fig. 2A, radial channels 44 completely surround each nozzle opening 42 that is centered on platform area 43. Channels 44 are connected by radial connecting channels 46 and 48 that emanate from radial channels 44, forming a network of connected channels that direct and hold stray fluid on the nozzle plate.

Referring particularly to Fig. 3, a nozzle opening 42 with an adjacent radial channel 44 is illustrated before drop ejection. Referring to Figs. 3A and 3B, waste ink 38 deposits on platform area 43 and is drawn into radial channel 44 by capillary forces. Referring to Fig. 3C, waste ink 38 is contained and distributed about nozzle opening 42 by radial channel 44. Upon encountering radial connecting channels 46 or 48, ink moves into the space defined by the radial connecting channel and then moves under capillary action radially away from nozzle opening 42 and into the network of connected channels that direct and hold stray fluid (see Fig. 2). When the nozzle plate is oriented vertically, waste ink moves through the network of channels under the influence of both gravity and capillary action, macroscopically in a single direction. When

the nozzle plate is oriented horizontally, a vacuum source or wicking material can be used to remove ink from the channels.